UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/223
2 March 1999
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 25 FEBRUARY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to bring to your attention the declaration on East Timor issued on 19 February 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dieter KASTRUP
Permanent Representative of
Germany to the United Nations

Annex

[Original: English and French]

Declaration on East Timor issued on 19 February 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union welcomes the positive results of the recent ministerial meeting held under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, at which the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Mr. Ali Alatas, officially announced Indonesia's new policy towards East Timor.

The European Union takes note of Indonesia's position that a wide-ranging autonomy within the constitutional framework of the Republic of Indonesia is the best option for the time being and of its intention to submit that proposal to a consultation by the East Timorese. Should the proposal be rejected by the East Timorese, the Indonesian Government will recommend that the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), to be elected in June 1998, revoke the Annexation Act of 1978 and accept the independence of East Timor.

The European Union is pleased that this new Indonesian policy recognizes that no lasting solution to this problem can be found without the consultation of the people of East Timor and that the parties concerned have agreed to examine United Nations proposals for an agreement on a procedure to accommodate the Indonesian proposals with the exercise of self-determination. The European Union is indeed of the opinion that the method of consultation of the East Timorese will be a key issue in this context.

In view of these developments, which have established a renewed impetus to the United Nations sponsored talks, the European Union emphasizes the necessity of international support for the efforts of the Secretary-General.

The European Union also welcomes the transfer of Mr. Xanana Gusmao from prison house arrest. In this context, it urges the Indonesian authorities to free completely Mr. Xanana Gusmao and other East Timorese political prisoners in order to create the best possible conditions to resolve the question of East Timor.

In the light of these recent positive developments, the European Union:

- Encourages the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to find a solution to the problem of East Timor;

- Stresses the need for a fair, free and comprehensive consultation of the East Timorese by the United Nations;

- Expresses its willingness to support the organization of such a consultation.

At the same time, the European Union encourages Indonesia to further reduce the level of its military presence in East Timor and expresses concern about the

arming of civilian militias, which may jeopardize the chances of finding a peaceful solution.

The European Union remains greatly concerned at the increased tension and violence in East Timor. The Union calls upon all sides to show restraint. It also calls for the disarmament and disbandment of militias. Furthermore, the European Union supports the urgent establishment of a United Nations presence in East Timor, which would contribute to decreasing the currently high level of tension.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with the present declaration.